



Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development Group
A Division of the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WITC, Hayward, WI
November 14, 2018

1. Meeting called to order at 10:10 AM by Vice-Chairman Scottie Sandstrom.

2. **Roll Call/Introductions:**

Members Present: Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Betsey Harries – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County (via phone), Jim Caesar – Representing Douglas County, Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County (via phone), John Will – Representing Education (WITC), Jenice Meyer – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group)

Members Absent: Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), Lynn Fitch – Representing Sawyer County, John Richards – Representing Burnett County, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge), Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County

Others Present: Jim Miller – Congressman Duffy's Office, Bob Kopisch – Price County Chair, Angie Dickison – State Broadband Director

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County, Tribal Representative

3. **Approval of September 12th, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the September 12th, 2018 meeting minutes was made by Geri D., a second was made by John W. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Broadband Presentation**

Angie Dickison, State Broadband Director for the Public Service Commission presented to the group on broadband access in Wisconsin. The presentation will be shared with the board via email and will also be made available on the Visions Northwest website (once Angie provides the final version).

5. **Election of Visions Northwest Executive Committee Members**

Chair

A motion by was made to nominate/elect Kelly Klein as Chair by Dale H., second by Jim C. No other nominations were made. Motion to elect Kelly Klein as Chair carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair

A motion was made to nominate/elect Mari Kay-Nabozny as Vice-Chair by John W., second by Jim C. No other nominations were made. Motion to elect Mari Kay-Nabozny as Vice-Chair carried unanimously.

Secretary/Treasurer

A motion was made to nominate/elect Geri Dresen as Secretary/Treasurer by John W., second by Jim C. No other nominations were made. Motion to elect Geri Dresen as Secretary/Treasurer carried unanimously.

6. **2019 Meeting Schedule**

Crystal proposed two options for the meeting schedule for 2019 (quarterly and bi-monthly). Given the lack of attendance from board members throughout the past year, discussion regarding moving to a quarterly meeting schedule occurred at the September meeting. Jim C. asked if moving the proposed quarterly schedule would impact Crystal's ability to move projects forward or the ability to do her job. Crystal explained that it would have no negative impact and that she could coordinate meetings through the executive committee as needed for specific projects, etc. She also stated that the communication with the board would continue to be continuous as it has been in years past. She will also provide bi-monthly updates on her Administrator duties to the board.

A motion to adopt the quarterly meeting schedule was made by Jim C., second by Jenice M. Motion carried unanimously.

7. **Visions Northwest Key Initiative Updates** **2019 RIsE**

The Executive Committee will convene in January to discuss RIsE 2019. We will plan to discuss format/topics/budget/etc. Updates will be provided to the full board through email correspondence. If anyone has thoughts/opinions on RIsE 2019, please get them to Crystal in early January so we can discuss them as a planning committee. Jim Miller provided praise for the past events and urged that we continue to build on the attraction focus as we plan future events.

Inspire Northward

Crystal included the Inspire Northward dashboard in the handouts which provided a visual update of the progress that has been made with the regional deployment since April of 2018. We have successfully onboarded over 30 businesses, 24 career coaches, and are providing 129 work-based learning activities in the region. The handout also included industry information, cluster information, etc. A comprehensive list of employers on Inspire Northward was also distributed.

Employer/Volunteer Summary (as of 11/12/2018 2:36:21 PM)

31
Number of Companies

24
Number of Career Coaches

129
Number of Work-based Learning Activities

Training has been coordinated with five out of seven of the pilot schools including Siren, Solon Springs, Hayward, Superior, and Maple. Staff are also working with Northwood and Ashland to coordinate training soon. Training has occurred in the form of a webinar – which has been recorded for future use and can be viewed on our website at: <https://www.inspirenorthward.org/technicalsupport/> - this link also provides MANY other resources for technical assistance for school districts AND employers. We anticipate to activate several of these pilot schools within the coming months.

Inspire is now "activated" statewide across all regions. More information regarding the state deployment can be found at: <https://www.inspirewisconsin.org/>

Wood Industry Collaborative

Crystal provided a brief update from the October meeting of the Wood Industry Collaborative. Discover Wisconsin came to provide an overview of marketing opportunities that the group could explore as we further discover options to support the industry.

The group has decided to seek funding to move forward a project under the "Know Your Wisconsin" package that Discover Wisconsin provides. Crystal provided details on the project in a handout to the members during the meeting.

8. **Around the Table**

Gerl Dresen (Iron River Chamber):

- Housing in the form of apartments/duplexes/condos is an ongoing issue in Iron River area – they are working with a local purchaser who is willing to buy and manage units
- Iron River will be hosting at the Northern Pines Sled Dog Race on February 16, 2019. They were recently awarded a Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grant from the Department of Tourism to support some of the marketing efforts.

- There are several good things happening in Iron River including the addition to the library and clinic, a new playground, new businesses/owners, and fiber broadband service from Norvado to name a few!

Betsey Harries (Ashland County):

- AADC received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to provide Veteran Entrepreneurship training. This will be a new entrepreneurship training program for military veterans who reside in either Ashland County or Bayfield County, Wisconsin. The goal of this free program is to provide training and support to veterans as they learn how to develop and launch their own businesses in Northern Wisconsin. More information can be found online at: <http://www.ashlandareadevelopment.com/readyvetgrow>

John Will (WITC):

- John stated that enrollments at WITC are up by 10%. They have 1,500 new students, 1,000 that are working adults so programming has been developed to accommodate these students. WITC also recently redeveloped their website and has a robust marketing staff and targeted effort. Check out the new website at: <https://www.witc.edu/>

Marie Steenlage (WEDC):

- The most recent rounds of the FabLab grants are currently underway. Marie has received three application requests within the region at this time.
- WEDC has recently produced many marketing videos of businesses, some which can be found right here in our region. To view these videos and others from across the state, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/ThinkMakeHappen/>

Jim Caesar (Douglas County):

- The focus on housing in Douglas County remains as the City of Superior recently hired a Housing Coordinator/Planner. A development including 54 units was sold before completion and another 96-unit development is currently underway.

Jenice Meyer (UW-Superior):

- UW-Superior is showing a slight increase in enrollment!

Jim Miller (Congressman Duffy's office):

- Congressman Duffy was recently re-elected for another term and will continue to focus on workforce, housing, and the drug/opioid epidemic. Another Hunger and Homelessness Summit is being planned.
- Speaking on behalf of Sawyer County, the Birkie bridge over Cty Hwy 00 is complete. A broadband expansion grant to expand service to that area is being sought. They Hayward Memorial Hospital has seen some recent success in provider recruitment!

Dale Heikkinen/Bob Kopisch (Price County):

- There are many business expansions across Price County and the Village of Prentice. The school recently passed a referendum. Price County still is seeing housing issues.
- Bob Kopisch added that the county recently finished the budget and will be shutting down the county tourism department and hiring the chambers to promote tourism. There is hope that this will help unify the county. ATV/UTV access has been opened year-round on designated roads.

Scottie Sandstrom (Bayfield County):

- Scottie expressed how much he has enjoyed working with all of the partners through the years as he heads into his retirement! He is happy to be able to "pass the baton" to Cole Rabska as we enter into 2019. Crystal thanked Scottie for his MANY years of dedication to Bayfield County and to Northwest Wisconsin. Scottie will be deeply missed by his colleagues and friends.

9. **Confirm Next Meeting Date**

The next Visions Northwest meeting will take place on January 9th, 2019 at 10:00 AM at WITC Hayward. Thomas Michels, Labor Market Economist with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development will be presenting at the meeting.

10. **Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Geri D.; with a second by John W.